

Where's Sharon? 3D art installations on campus.
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NECC celebrated Halloween with parties on both campuses.
Story on page 7

What's so scary? Certainly not the monsters in 'Goosebumps'
Review page 12

NECC Observer

Northern Essex
Community College

The award-winning student newspaper of Northern Essex Community College • Haverhill and Lawrence, Mass.

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Fall 2015 • Volume 79 • Issue Number 5 • Nov. 4, 2015

News Bytes

NECC IS PROUD TO RECOGNIZE FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENT VETERANS!

General Staff Meeting
Presentation on Veteran & Military Students

November 9, 2015
12-1PM

TC103 & LC301

Geared for faculty and staff to help better understand our Veteran and Active Service Military Students.

Darkness and Light, a Documentary film by Thi Linh Wernau

November 10, 2015
6-8:30PM

C-Building, Lecture Hall A
Wernau interviews eleven wounded veterans through the lens of her photography series, "You. Are. Beautiful."
— a project celebrating the human spirit and beauty in all people. Free refreshments will be available. Please RSVP to engagement@necc.mass.edu.

Veterans Appreciation Luncheon

November 12, 2015
12-1PM

TC103

Please RSVP.

Men's Basketball Game vs. Mass Bay Community College

November 12, 2015
6PM

Sport & Fitness Center
Veterans and Military Members will be honored during half-time. There will be a fund-raiser for Operation Hat Trick, supporting wounded soldiers. There will also be some free giveaways for Veterans and Military Members!

For more information, please contact the host of this event, the Student Engagement Center 978-556-3731 or engagement@necc.mass.edu. Check us out on Facebook under NECCEngage.

Contract talks continue



Photo by Name Name

The Massachusetts Community College Council union held a second informational picket on Thursday, Oct. 22 from 8:30 - 9 a.m. Faculty and staff held signs in front of the main entrance on the Haverhill campus to raise awareness about contract negotiations. The contract expired in June and negotiations are ongoing.

Faculty and staff union seeks end to contract issues

By KIM WHITING

Editor-in-Chief

At community colleges throughout the state of Massachusetts, 1,400 professors, librarians and other full time professional staff members are currently working without a contract.

"The contract expired at the end of June. We continued to meet with the state over July and August and into September with still no opening financial offer from the state," said Joseph LeBlanc, "...at some point, the (union) began to lose patience."

LeBlanc is a professor at NECC. He was the faculty adviser for the Observer for 14 years and he is currently the president

of the Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC), which is the union that represents faculty and staff at the 15 community colleges in Massachusetts.

A full time professor since 1988, LeBlanc said that he was unhappy with the policies toward higher education in the state under Gov. William Weld and took action by joining the union.

"I pursued a pathway to become the president of the statewide union because I was not happy, but that was a long time ago. We were going through a lot of years with no raises," he said.

After four years as the vice president and nearly 10 years as the MCCC president, LeBlanc said that this year is the longest the negotiations have dragged on during his career with the union.

Contracts are negotiated every three years and although the adjunct (part-time) professors

are also covered under a union contract, the contracts are not in sync, so theirs was negotiated about two years ago, without incident, under Gov. Deval Patrick's administration. The adjunct professors are receiving a 4 percent raise in January.

LeBlanc said, "I don't want to judge the incoming governor too harshly, but time will tell if he'll be a friend to public higher ed and particularly a friend to community colleges."

"We'll see, but as of right now, I'm not enjoying the experience of these contract talks at all. They're dragging on for too long."

LeBlanc went on to say that during times of economic crisis, the union has been patient and willing to accept that the state could not afford a larger increase in pay and that they have even gone long periods of time without

a contract in the past. The terms of the previous contract continue to apply until a new agreement is reached. However, LeBlanc said, "During normal times, we expect to have a contract in place for a 3 year period... we're not expecting to get a 10 percent pay increase but we're at least expecting to have a fair deal."

(Continued on page 5)

Welcome, Nowinski



Photo by Kim Whiting

Former Harvard football player and WWE wrestler, Chris Nowinski, came to NECC to talk about his experiences with head injuries and to raise awareness about the long term effects of concussions. Read the full story on page 10.

Being an adjunct professor

Adjuncts do the same work with none of the benefits

By SARAH TISO AND KIM WHITING

Features Editor and Editor-in-Chief

In Massachusetts, the number of full time faculty at the community colleges is 1,400 statewide and part-timers total 5,200 statewide, according to the Massachusetts Community Council website.

Adjunct professors teach about two-thirds of the classes taught at the state's 15 community colleges, according to the MCCC. They are part-time employees, paid per class. They receive none of the same benefits as full-time employees, such as healthcare and pension plans, for example.

Joe LeBlanc is a full-time professor at NECC and

president of the Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC). This union represents both the full time and adjunct professors, as well as other professional staff and faculty, at all 15 community colleges in the state.

LeBlanc said, "We have sued the state for (health insurance coverage for adjuncts) and we did not win that suit. I think all health care ought to be free. A lot of it is driven by profit."

State law classifies the adjuncts as contract employees; therefore, the state is not required to provide them with health insurance. "I don't agree with the law, but we have been working to change that law and the universal health care law we have now helped to an extent."

(Continued on page 8)

Editorial

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Training grounds

By KIM WHITING
Editor-in-Chief

When the Methuen Police Academy began training on campus last year, students had a lot of questions about who they are and why they are on the NECC campus and whether they have to buy a permit to park in the lot. People had questions, but no serious complaints.

Maybe they were marching in the hallway too loudly and a teacher had to shut a door. Sometimes, they would take up too much of the road leading into the parking lot during their morning run.

Also, the parking lot was more crowded. We love to talk about the parking lot.

All of that aside, the general consensus seemed to be that they need to train somewhere, after all, and we didn't see that much of them around campus, since they mostly kept to themselves on the first floor of the E building. Having the Police Academy on campus last year was really a non-issue.

In September, though, the Essex County Sheriff's department moved into the E building and the Methuen

Police Academy moved to the first floor of the Spurk building. Students used to seeing uniforms and training exercises on campus didn't even notice the addition at first except to say that the training was a lot louder now, and far more visible, since trainees were now using Lecture Hall A, the quad, the athletic field, even the tennis court. And, of course, the parking lot.

Still, one student admitted, it was no more disruptive than when a leaf blower is passing by your classroom. So nobody really complained.

All of that has changed over the past couple of weeks, though, as the level of aggression and violence expressed in the training exercises has grown to uncomfortable levels and caused many students and faculty to ask much more serious questions about the appropriateness of these training activities being conducted on an active college campus. Especially one that houses an active daycare center.

Observer staff will look into this over the next weeks and we will try to answer all of your questions in the next issue.

Letter: Alum concerned about police presence

Dear Editor,

I'm a recent NECC alum, and I came back to campus a few weeks ago to visit some teachers and friends. When I was walking across campus with my friend to get to her class, I noticed the police recruits, who had just moved onto the NECC campus the year I graduated, were practicing combat routines on the quad in between B and C buildings.

I was alarmed that they were practicing these loud and disruptive activities in the proximity of classes, in a space where small children from the daycare center play and take walks, and in a space where students eat lunch and socialize.

The recruits should be practicing these loud routines far away from classrooms and students because they can be disruptive to a learning environment and can cause anxiety and panic attacks in students with conditions like gen-

eral anxiety disorder, agoraphobia and PTSD.

I was also not pleased to find out that the recruits regularly book Lecture Hall A to the point where it is becoming very difficult for student clubs to use the room for academic meetings and events. Lecture Hall A is an important space for events, especially for the Liberal Arts, and the students at NECC should have priority.

I can only hope that Lane Glenn, David Gingerella and Bill Heine-man will address the students' concerns with respect and prompt action.

Sincerely,
Faith Gregory
Communications and Political Science Alumna
Former Editor-in-Chief of the NECC Observer
Former President of Contemporary Affairs Club

NECC Observer

The award-winning student newspaper
of Northern Essex Community College

Room C-222, Spurk building,
100 Elliott St. Haverhill, MA 01830

Newsroom 978.556.3027
Adviser 978.556.3397

Advertising 978.556.3397
observer@necc.mass.edu

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Publication Schedule

issue #	Publication Date	Ad/Copy Deadline
5	Nov. 4	Oct. 28
6	Nov. 11	Nov. 11
7	Dec. 2	Nov. 25
8	Dec. 16	Dec. 9

We welcome letters and articles from our readers. You can submit via email, and must include your name and phone number for verification. Write "Letter" or "Article to Editor" in the subject line so we notice it right away.

Send your letters to observer@necc.mass.edu

We try to publish all letters we receive, but we reserve the right to edit or reject those we receive.

The NECC Observer is a member of the Associated Collegiate Press, College Media Advertisers Inc., the Colombia Scholastic Press Association, and the New England Press Association.

Roaming Reporter

How do you avoid the winter blues?



"I like to go shopping.
If I look good, I feel good."

ROSE ALICEA
Early Education



"Watch TV and think
about spring."

OLIVIA MOSES
Liberal Arts



"Random snow football
games."

ANGEL BAEZ
Liberal Arts



"Bowling."

DANIELLE LAMIRANDE
Deaf Studies



"Take a trip to Santa's
Village."

DAVID PORTER
Human Services



"Lightsaber duels!"

NATE MILLER
General Studies; Art

Opinion

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Photography majors face career challenges

The struggle of the photography industry

By RACHEL ROZAVSKY
Opinions Editor

Lance Hidy, director of the Art Design & Photography Department at Northern Essex, says low enrollment is causing photography classes to be cancelled.

"I wish there was a way students could spread the word," Hidy says. As someone who has always had a passion for the arts, I would love to be able to take more photography courses, if only they would fill. Hidy's background has led him to have a lifelong passion for the arts. "As a child, I learned reading through comic books," he said.

"I would look at the pictures and that's how I would figure out the storyline."

Because of this, he started to

read more and more about photography, as well as watching Disney animated movies and television shows.

NECC offers six courses in photography, and can also help students obtain internship opportunities in the field.

Some of the internships offered are a yearbook company where a student gets to edit photos and community theatre where they get to experience taking real headshots.

Some are even paid! I think this is an amazing idea, because photography is such a hard field to get into.

Not only do you get to experience the real world, but network and gain connections that can help your future in the industry.

NECC student Lissangy Rodriguez has had a passion for photography since her sophomore year of high school.

"I had an absolutely phenomenal instructor named Brian Trainor, who made me start to see the world as an opportunity for art," she said.

"My sophomore year of high school I had friends that were graduating and in the need of senior portraits."

"They were incredibly dismayed they had to pay \$200 for their portraits, so I then offered to take their photos, which made me realize that this is my true calling."

Since then, Rodriguez has started her own photography business. The biggest struggle of obtaining a business is defending her price; some people tend to undervalue the craft, which can make it difficult to make a living.

"This is a strange cultural norm that makes some people believe art is not as valuable as it really is," she said.



Photo by Rachel Rozavsky

One of these photos was taken with a phone and one with a digital camera. Can you tell them apart?

As someone who is an artist and working on obtaining a sturdy organization, it's one of the hardest jobs to keep steady customers and compromise on a reason price.

Rodriguez has grown her com-

pany by social media and word of mouth.

"I absolutely love making (my customers) all feel great about themselves," she said. "I try to make every photoshoot an experience."

A review of NECC's Cabaret event

NECC held its 12th Cabaret event on Oct. 22

By RACHEL ROZAVSKY
Opinions Editor

The Cabaret took place at the Hartleb Technology Building, last Thursday, Oct. 22.

The director of the event was Alisa Bucchiere, who is in charge of the Music Department at NECC. Bucchiere said she loves to see the diversity each year with Cabaret.

"I've seen everything from Chinese rap to tap dancing," Buc-

chiere said.

The show was \$5, and all proceeds went to the Music Choral Club so they have an opportunity to see a live show.

I was surprised by the low amount of people in the audience, but it might have been because it followed on a Thursday night instead of a weekend.

The first act had a rough start and didn't have many strong performers.

Luckily it ended with a great finish from Bryanna Brown, Ambar Marte Vargas, and Carli Hamilton. Hamilton, who is a Music Therapy and Vocal Performance

major, blew the audience away with her "The Last Five Years" Broadway cover of "Still Hurting."

She is working on finishing her general courses and plans on transferring to Berklee College of Music in January.

The second act was by far my favorite. I felt the performers were a lot stronger, especially Liza Lynehan who sang Lady Gaga's Glitter in the Air.

But my alltime

favorite who ended the show was Carli Hamilton, who sang "Watch What Happens" from the hit Broadway show Newsies.

As someone who grew up enjoying music, I always find myself critiquing, whether it's a cab-

aret show or just watching people sing on television.

The next Cabaret show will take place on April 4, 2016 at 7:30 p.m. in the Hartleb Tech Center.

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I've seen everything from Chinese rap to
tap dancing.
- Alisa Bucchiere

News

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Kenoza Street detour continues

Construction at the end of Kenoza Street may cause delays

By KIM WHITING
Editor-in-Chief

In the Oct. 7 issue, The Observer ran a News Byte stating that the "Kenoza Street entrance will be closed indefinitely." This headline was confusing and misleading.

Later that day, NECC Facilities Management sent an email stating, in part, that "The Kenoza Street entrance to the college will remain closed indefinitely."

This is incorrect. The entrance to Kenoza Street was closed from the Amesbury Road end, but the entrance to the college itself has not been affected at either the Technology Center parking lot, or the C Building lot entrances.

The Observer takes responsibility for printing the misleading information that likely led to this mistake. We apologize for any inconvenience caused by the confusion and felt that it merited clarification.

On Monday, Oct. 5, Kenoza Street was closed to traffic entering from Amesbury Road at the west, or northwest, end. A police

officer was on duty ensuring that vehicles did not enter from that end and also detouring traffic coming from the southeast end around the utility crew that was working there.

This was not the first day the road had been closed there. Several days the week before, students complained that it took several extra minutes to get to school

due to the detour, and expressed curiosity about how long it would continue, prompting me to ask the officer on duty that day for information.

The officer, whose name I neglected to obtain, stated that the utility crew is scheduled to be on this job "indefinitely." He explained that the crew will not rush, as they are working on a

gas main, and that the work will continue "all the way down the street," indicating that students should expect delays to continue.

While the road was closed for a few more days that week, the crew disappeared shortly afterwards, taking their detour with them. A large metal plate on the road, a few pieces of pipe and half a dozen orange cones were

the only evidence left of the crew for nearly two weeks.

Seeking clarification of what students should expect in the coming weeks, Observer staff contacted John Pettis, head of Haverhill DPW's engineering department. In a telephone interview, Pettis stated that he contacted National Grid on our behalf and was told that they are replacing a regulator pit and approximately 40 - 50 feet of pipe.

Crews were delayed while waiting for a part to be delivered but they were back on duty on Wednesday, Oct. 21 and the replacement part was expected to be delivered and installed on Fri., Oct. 23.

National Grid is expected to continue working for 2-3 weeks from that date, with an additional week of road work to follow, meaning that the work will continue through the first half of November.

The college entrances will not be affected, but traffic at this end of Kenoza Street will be delayed or diverted periodically during this time. Commuters who take this route should leave themselves extra time.



Photo by Kim Whiting

Utility work and road closings will continue at the north/northwest end of Kenoza Street. Traffic is expected to be diverted to Elliot Street periodically until the middle of November.

Student Senate News

The Student Senate meets every Wednesday from 3-5 p.m. in A112 on the Haverhill Campus and L244 on the Lawrence campus. Both rooms are equipped with a video feed allowing for live conferencing between the two groups of students.

The role of the senators is to serve as representatives of the student body to help promote the best possible relationship between students on both campuses, faculty and staff.

Exerpts from the Oct. 14 meeting minutes:

- * Senate welcomes Lane Glenn as a guest
- * Glenn mentions that if someone finds a textbook at a certain price elsewhere, Follett will match that price
- * Sam Ricioppi proposed the idea of having a student-cadet luncheon
- * Ricioppi asked about proper accommodations for people with disabilities with regards to entering the school
- * Ray Florent asked about paint that was to be painted on the field for the students playing football
- * Chad Gorham asked about the emergency drills that NECC has; he proposed a more realistic crisis, such as a potential shooting/gunman on campus
- * Glenn asked for the insight of the Senate with regards to the idea of shooter detection systems
- * Glenn mentioned the amount of reported crimes that annually occur on both Northern Essex campuses; a mean of 5 for Haverhill, and 3 for Lawrence

The Student Senate website has not yet been updated. The current Senate officers are as follows:

President - Chad Gorham *

Vice President, Haverhill - Sam Racioppi

Marketing Chair - Jasmine Polanco

Treasurer - William Pound

Programming Chair, Haverhill - Nate Miller

Senators - Nate Miller, Jonathan Matos, Elvis Medina

Vice President, Lawrence - Jordan Castro

Secretary - Grant Bellino

Parliamentarian - Ray Florent

Programming Chair, Lawrence - Jackie Torres

All members of the NECC community are encouraged to attend the meetings, or to contact the senators at the following locations:

Haverhill, D125
978-556-3731

Lawrence, L133
978-738-7417

"The mission of the NECC Student Senate is to promote the interests of the students, improve student participation in decision making and encourage the integration between students, faculty, staff and campus organizations while uniting both campuses in the creation of positive change."

* Chad Gorham is also the Campus Life editor of the NECC Observer.

Paying homage to veterans

By KELLY SCHWING
News Editor

NECC will be celebrating Veteran and Military Appreciation Week from Nov. 9 to Nov. 12.

On Monday, there will be a panel of veterans answering questions about transitioning from military life to student life in TC103 and L244 at noon. This event is open to faculty, staff and veterans.

"Darkness and Light," a documentary focusing on post-9/11 veterans by Thi Linh Wernau, will be shown on the Haverhill campus Tuesday at 6 p.m. in Lecture Hall A. The Sports and Fitness Center will simultaneously be holding a basketball game to honor veterans. During the game, there will be a fundraiser for Operation Hat Trick, an organization

that helps support wounded soldiers and their families. Veterans will be honored during halftime.

On Wednesday, the college will be closed in honor of service members past and present.

To wrap up Veteran and Military Appreciation Week, there will be a luncheon honoring student, faculty and staff veterans and active military members in TC103 from noon to 1 p.m. on Thursday.

Anyone interested in attending the film or the luncheon should contact the Student Engagement Center at (978) 556-3731 or engagement@necc.mass.edu to RSVP.

The Veteran Service Organization meets every other Monday at 5:30 p.m. in SC213 in Haverhill.

“

My hope was to portray veterans in a new light as beautiful human beings.

- Thi Linh Wernau, director

”

News

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Union contract issues continue to escalate

(continued from page 1)

A fair deal would give the employees a 3.5 percent pay increase each year of the three year contract, according to LeBlanc, which would mimic the 2014 contract accepted by their counterparts in other higher education settings.

"The current financial offer from the state is 2 percent in year one, 2.5 percent in year two and 2.5 percent in year three," he said.

"Everyone else in higher ed, UMass, the state universities and so forth, came to terms in 2014 at 3.5 percent, 3.5 percent, 3.5 percent."

"That was under a previous administration so this is a new group but we're trying to push for the 3.5 percent."

LeBlanc does not think that an increase in professor's salary would translate to an increase in student fees, since they are voted on by the trustees based on the amount of state funding received that year and not so much on actual operating costs.

Since classes began in September, many NECC professors have been wearing buttons in an effort to raise awareness about the issues. In October, the protest became far more visible when a dozen or so faculty members be-

gan to hold informational pickets in front of the main entrance of the Haverhill campus encouraging people to beep and wave "to communicate to the president and his team that this needs to stop," LeBlanc said.

These pickets were informational only. Teachers are not allowed to go on strike, since they are public employees.

On the other side of the issue, The Massachusetts Board of Higher Education (MBHE) has a committee of 10 members who are appointed by the college presidents. The board includes lawyers, provosts of academic affairs, human resource professionals and a spokesperson for the MBHE and includes NECC head of human resources.

NECC President Lane Glenn is the chair of the president's council. He reports to the board on the current state of affairs and he comments on issues that come up related to the community colleges. Glenn is also one of three members that serve on the president's labor relations committee, according to LeBlanc.

Glenn did not respond to an Observer email prior to the printing of this article.

Fed up after months with no results, faculty overfilled confer-

ence rooms on both the Haverhill and Lawrence campuses on Monday, Oct. 26 and voted unanimously to implement "work to rule."

This is when everyone agrees to do their job only to the letter of what the contract requires. "People frequently do a whole lot more than (what the contract requires). They may take on extra advisees, they might do all kinds of things that are in technical violation of the contract, but it's because we're here to help the students," said LeBlanc.

He does not think that the students will be much affected by this development, since the professors are contractually required to hold office hours and to serve on one committee or club anyway.

"We were on work to rule a couple of times when I was the adviser of the paper and I continued to work with the students to help them put out the paper since that was part of my job ... I could have cut back, but I chose not to," LeBlanc said, since the number of hours that he put in far exceeded what was required of him.

The only potential effect to students this year is that professors may limit their email responses to office hours and use

an automated message to answer for them when they are not on the clock.

The potential also exists for some extra clubs or field trips to be suspended, if a professor is carrying more than what is required of them, but LeBlanc said that the administration is far more likely to feel the effects of this than the students.

"It will take us a few weeks to iron out the kinks of work to rule so that more and more people might become aware of it," LeBlanc said. "People will still be teaching, they'll be doing their job, they'll be holding their office hours."

The difference, he explained, is that while they will still be serving on their college committee's, their only input will be to move to adjourn them. If anyone seconds a motion to adjourn, it forces the committee to vote. If the committee votes to adjourn then the work of that particular committee will not get done.

Work to rule is now in effect at about half of the community colleges across the state and is expected to grow over the coming weeks to include nearly all of them.

"We've been trying to grind this out, we really have," said

LeBlanc, "but we just thought, it's time to proceed down the road to do some picketing, to go on work to rule."

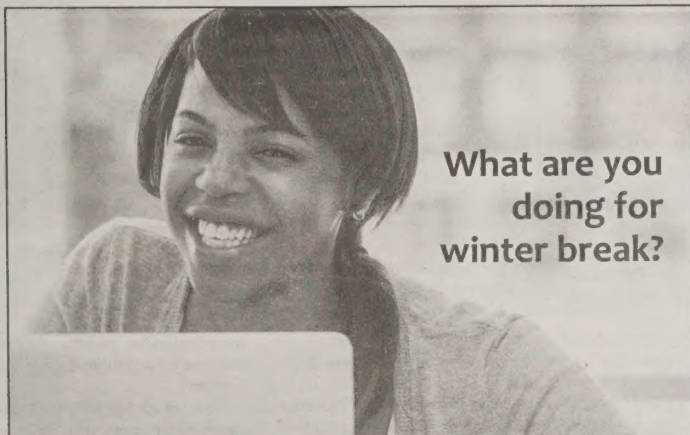
LeBlanc said, "Nobody likes this, but from now on in, you're going to have people going to (a meeting) and they'll move to adjourn. So, technically, they're there, but they want to cause the colleges and the state some pain here, some friction, cause some anxiety, you know."

Political Science professor Stephen Slaner said, "I see the problem at NECC as a function of the state policy on higher education in general, and having a Republican governor isn't all that helpful."

He deferred to LeBlanc for comments on the specifics of the current negotiations.

LeBlanc said that teachers have gone years without a contract in the past "during really hostile administrations" and he pointed out that Gov. Charlie Baker was on the staff of former Gov. William Weld during one such time.

"I'm hoping that he (Gov. Baker) values public higher ed and really values the community colleges and the role that we play. The smartest thing to do, I think, is to come to terms ASAP."



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3D art has a renaissance on campus

Three-dimensional art provides a new medium for students

By REBECCA WESTERMAN

Arts and Entertainment Editor

Passersby may have taken notice of some unconventional sights, such as Sharon the slumbering student, and the nonchalant tree in a wheelbarrow around campus on their travels to classes or in between.

The creative minds responsible for the slightly unnerving and fascinating sculptures are none other than students in the 3D Design course offered at NECC.

The course offers a diverse experience that is different from other art courses. It incorporates kinesthetic skills, with abstract and creative projects that allow the artists freedom to express themselves with their hands.

"There is more freedom in this

challenge and something I hadn't anticipated," said Kozdra.

Perhaps students and staff have seen some of his work, such as the "Wolf Man," which had originally been planned to have been coming out of the bushes.

The administration, however, didn't want to frighten people with the Wolf Man coming out of the bushes, so the project was changed a little bit.

"We were all in groups. My group made the Wolf Man. Pretty much we took a Halloween skull and plastered it, and added a nose and ears and made it look like a wolf face," said Kozdra.

The tree in a wheelbarrow in the far end of the C Building is the handiwork of Dylan McDougall, art major and current TA of the 3D Design course.

"It's been great, I have been a TA for this class twice. I like working with Dianne for sure, it's almost like how in the Renais-

lation. I went to graduate school at Maryland Institute College of Art (MICA) and got an MFA (Masters of Fine Art). It was an interdisciplinary program, we could work in whatever medium we wanted but that's sort of what I ended up liking to do. While I was there I became interested in teaching and did a teaching internship with a professor.

"When I got out I started looking for jobs, and it's uncommon to find a job opening for 3D and sculpture. It seems there are many more jobs in multimedia and that sort of thing. So this was right up my alley, and I applied and got the job.

"At the time, NECC was trying to boost their 3D offerings because we had a lot of painting and drawing and digital classes, but there really wasn't an emphasis on 3D," said Pappas. The great thing about 3D art is that you don't really need prior art experience to make something really cool and explore your creative side.

"You can come and take these courses without any experience. You just have to come with an open mind, sometimes that's hard! It's hard to build things!

"We talk about this all the time: people take a drawing course or a painting course, everyone can get a mark down on a paper and it may not necessarily be a beautiful thing but you can do that and it's much harder to build things in space and actually have the aesthetic outcome.

"It's frustrating and it takes some more experimentation and time and work at it. That's not to say you don't put the same amount of effort into 2D courses but its different," said Pappas, with a laugh.

"A struggle often encountered with the 3D class is the fine line between where an installation can go and if it is appropriate. Often times, a sculpture will be removed after only a day We have a lot of limitations now, with the facilities because for instance last semester we had a student who worked on a homeless man project.

"We didn't get anything approved, the students didn't know where they wanted to put this guy, they put him outside and within 10 minutes the first person to run into him was the dean, who called security.

"It just went on all day, security started getting calls, people were worried about this homeless person creeping around on campus. There was signage however; it was very well done so people didn't read the sign.

"They must have seen the cardboard sign with Sharpie and figured he was homeless. Because of that, I feel like we now have some new limitations because of the element of surprise and fear," said Pappas.

However, the recent climate of high vigilance around college



Photo by Nicholas Stuart

This piece of art, titled "Bottle in a Ship," stands near the Tech Center parking lot.



Photo by Nicholas Stuart

"Sleeping Sharon" has given many students a scare on the Haverhill campus.

campuses gives reason for why there are limitations on what can be installed and what cannot, she said.

"We have shootings like what just happened in Oregon, so people are afraid, I think there is an element of fear, and security and sensitivity in the community, so I understand the administration's standpoint, but we're just trying to get people to look," said Pappas.

Installation involves sculpture, it involves the site that you place the piece in. It's creating an experience for the person who is looking at it.

The point is to make a person stop in their tracks and do a double-take, or in some way relate to it.

Sometimes the most poignant pieces are those a person sees when they are least expecting it, and to take a moment to observe.

"I feel like that happens with the installation projects. I think that you do a double-take, which is great.

"We want people to think about what they just saw and what they're not used to seeing and to think about that. People are familiar with Sharon now, but the familiarity kind of defeats the purpose in it. It's not that you're looking for an element of surprise, it's more something you discover and an experience you have.

"To define or describe what an art piece is supposed to be defeats the purpose. To censor art is a problem, and I know that's not what our curriculum is about I mean it should be exactly the opposite. On the other hand there are rules that need to be followed so I'm willing to compromise," said Pappas.

than, say, a structured art class. My favorite project was the installation of a metal spider web with sea glass spider in a tree, and that was two years ago," said Matthew Willwerth, who took the class as a student and returned as a teacher's assistant.

The classroom was bustling with activity, with students like Zachary Kozdra, art major, working on projects: using their hands to mold clay, cut wood and attach random materials together to create masterpieces.

"I've always liked art, and when I got into this class I thought I was gonna be drawing more than actual crafting but now that I know it's more crafting I'm much more into it. it's like a new

sance all the artists worked under another artist so it's kinda cool to have that effect working under an artist who is in the field and doing their thing. I've definitely learned a lot about sculpture and building," said McDougall.

A preference of his is work with natural materials like sticks from trees, which influences his art in a beautiful and naturalistic way.

"I work a lot with sticks and that kind of thing. I've always been that guy that did that thing with the sticks so I kinda stuck to it," said McDougall.

Dianne Pappas became an art professor at NECC in 2013.

"My particular area of art that I work in is sculpture and instal-



Photo by Nicholas Stuart

The "Parachute Man," one of the installation projects done by the 3D Design course.

There is more freedom in this than, say, a structured art class.

- Matthew Willwerth

Campus Life

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Haunted happenings at NECC

Spookiness has been spreading around both campuses

By CHAD GORHAM
Campus Life Editor

There were ghosts, goblins, nerds and Ninja Turtles running all over both NECC campuses for Halloween celebrations that spanned over two days for three events.

The three events included two student Halloween parties: one that took place on the Lawrence Campus, and one that took place on the Haverhill campus. The parties included caramel apple making, cocktail meatballs, nachos and apple cider.

Jailene Amador attended the event in Lawrence, where she enjoyed some of the food that was served. "The staff in the Student Engagement Center always make sure we are fed and having a good time," she said.

The event also included "Candy Bar Meltdown," where students had to guess what the can-

dy bars were after they had been melted and put on a plate. Chris Lombardo, a Business Transfer student, said, "There was one that I just could not tell what it was. I think it was a Three Musketeer, but it was flat as a pancake."

There were not too many costumes worn on the Lawrence campus, but there were enough on the Haverhill campus to hold a costume contest. The most original was a rocker. He had a matching red and black outfit; even his

treat for children in the NECC community. They could stop at different offices along the route such as the president's office, the marketing department, the library and many other offices around the school.

Director of Student Engagement Dina Brown said, "It's a lot of work, but it's what we do."

At the event the Choral Club sang some Halloween songs and told some jokes to entertain the kids. They even did their own rendition of "The Twelve Days of Christmas" to a Halloween theme song called, "Thirteen Spooky Nights of Halloween." The kids sang along and danced their little hearts

You get to hang ornaments and kiss people!

- Noah Chicklis, 3 years old

hair matched. Victoria Gonzalez was a judge at the costume contest.

She said, "He just stood out to me. As I looked out at the crowd of costumes I would notice that one the most."

Also the Student Engagement Center and many other departments in the school worked together to organize a safe trick or

out. The song was also a hit with a lot of the people in the Student Engagement Center as they all sang right along with the kids.

Faculty, staff and students brought their children all around the campus. When they arrived in the Sports and Fitness Center, the kids were treated to caramel apples, decorating their own cupcakes and cookies, and lots of arts



Photo by Chad Gorham

Students are participating in the "Count the Candy Corn" game for a chance to win a prize.

and crafts.

Jennifer Assenza, a Criminal Justice major, brought her daughter, who was dressed as Minnie Mouse. They walked to every building that was passing out treats.

"We had a great time, the people were so nice. It's nice to see the college participating in something like this and keeping the kids safe."

From crafts to candy and plenty of walking around campus. The children and the students, as well as the parents, really enjoyed their time at the trick-or-treat. Ari Chicklis, staff member at the Student Engagement Center, brought her three-year-old son Noah. He was dressed like a Ninja Turtle. Noah said he loves Halloween because "You get to hang ornaments and kiss people!"

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Photo by Chad Gorham

"Dirt dessert" and other gross-out goodies were served at NECC's Halloween party.

Features

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How adjuncts fight for equal rights

Lack of benefits are problematic for the adjunct professors

By SARAH TISO

Features Editor

(continued from page 1)

"They should have the same pension that I have. There could be some friction there between those that are purely part time, and they teach at two, three, four institutions just to pay the rent..."

"The percentage of adjuncts is pretty high. Twenty adjuncts could be four full time instructors. I would like to see more hope for those who want/need a permanent full time job with benefits," Developmental Studies Adjunct Professor, Christopher Corcoran, said.

The practice of using adjuncts began as a way to allow working professionals to apply their knowledge in the classroom, but as the number of students increased, the number of full time teachers remained stagnant. The additional caseload was passed on to these part time employees.

"Right now it's shrinking a bit, because our enrollments are dropping," said LeBlanc. "Historically, during great times, everybody has work."

Academic Preparation Adjunct, Kelly Boylan, adds that job security is often difficult because an adjunct's course load is determined by student enrollment. "I strive to have a strong relationship with my students and put their needs first. As an adjunct, I don't have an office, but I make myself available to my students," she said.

The result of this trend is that many adjunct professors are teaching a full caseload, sometimes even teaching multiple classes at multiple campuses.

"What's even worse is the fact that 'Jane Smith' can work an entire career adjuncting and she will not have a pension and she does not have any way to retire unless she has a source of outside income or she inherits cash. If you choose to toil away in the trenches as an adjunct for your entire career (you) cannot afford to retire," said LeBlanc.

Corcoran explains the give-and-take of being an adjunct by showing what happens when classes get cancelled: "If we don't continually teach, in time we lose certain benefits and our pay-scale is reduced. But we don't get offered courses continually and consistently."

"So most of us need to have other jobs and often, when we do get offered courses, those courses conflict with those other jobs. Also, I am not sure of how it works with the seniority of adjuncts and who gets offered courses first. One colleague has taught eight adjunct courses!"

An Inside Higher Ed article by Colleen Flaherty earlier this year said "A common refrain from adjunct professors who get relatively low pay and little institutional support is that their working conditions are students' learning conditions. But many colleges and universities continue to ignore that message and rely on part-time faculty to deliver the majority of instruction."

"A new paper is calling out those institutions for their lack of attention to faculty career designs and is demanding meaningful, collaborative discussions to address what it calls an existential threat to American higher education."

"Part-time adjuncts who want full-time jobs should have more full-time opportunities available to them," said Corcoran. "Non-academic work could be combined with our teaching duties to create full-time positions with contracts and healthcare. We don't always have to be tenure-track professors with a private office. Just a full-time job would be nice."

"Yes, maybe we would be considered over-qualified to do clerical work, but I doubt we would turn it down in order to get a full-time, permanent, benefited

they enjoy the flexibility the system offers.

"I think there are varied types of adjuncts so they cannot be stereotyped as one group. There are those who want to be involved in the school and students and those who just want to teach a course without further interaction. Each person has their own schedule and style of interaction," said Mark Beaudry, an adjunct for the Department of Behavioral Sciences.

Fallon said, "I love being around the academic atmosphere. I enjoy the fact that people are trying to improve themselves through education and am genuinely grateful to be part of that process. A disadvantage is that I do not get to do it enough."

"I have decades of industry experience to share and would love to find other avenues besides the classroom to make that happen. With the help of the department staff, I'm starting to make some progress."

Another glaring difference for an adjunct professor is their lack of accessibility for students who may be seeking extra help. Full time professors also serve as advisers and they have the opportunity to develop a bond with students.

The MTA website states that, "Higher ed faculty members see this as a significant issue because establishing such connections can contribute to long-term success — and at times may determine whether a student remains in school."

Jerome Fallon, Adjunct in Global Studies, said, "You only convene for 16 classes maximum so it is vital to get to know your students quickly. Reach people immediately on a personal and respectful level from the beginning."

"For me, it is not about me instructing the student it is about us finding a way to succeed as a two

need to do so. A lot of adjunct professors have a lengthy commute, and therefore limits their time on campus, which in turn reduces or eliminates their office hours due to the excessive inconvenience."

Technology is a definite aid to adjuncts with little office time. Corcoran said, "I do believe ad-

but the inequality between the adjunct professors and the full-time, union protected faculty is undeniable and is likely to remain that status quo for the foreseeable future."

In 2009, the MTA, the MCCC and five professors, including NECC professor Patrick Lochelt, filed suit against the state seeking

If you choose to toil away in the trenches as an adjunct for your entire career (you) cannot afford to retire.

- Joe LeBlanc

health insurance coverage for adjunct professors, but they were unsuccessful. Health insurance costs are soaring

throughout the country but it is particularly noteworthy in Massachusetts, where health insurance is mandatory. This forces the adjunct professors to make hard budgeting decisions that can negatively impact their quality of life.

Fallon said, "Having access to healthcare would be great, but it does not look like it is going to happen. I know the union is working diligently on behalf of all faculty and I confess to not knowing as much as I should about the negotiations."

"Healthcare is a nightmare. But adjuncts do have an office," said Corcoran. "I call it the 'Dorm-Office,' as it is like a quad in that it has many desks. No parties though. Or none that I have been invited to. I have often said that if we really figured out our true hourly wage, we would be better off at Walmart with healthcare and a set schedule. I think the hardest part is coming to the realization that it is what it is, and will probably always be so."

According to Fallon, one improvement might be to have additional training options available for IT topics for adjuncts. "I get great support when I call in to the tech groups, but it would be ideal if there was someone there at night who I could visit to learn the nuances," said Fallon.

"They (the part-time instructors) are going to get a 4 percent raise in January. 'It's up to the college to pay that 4 percent raise, but I'll also say that the part-time instructors here are largely a cash cow in that you only have to have eight or nine in a class to pay the paycheck of that instructor,'" LeBlanc said. He said that he would like to think that there isn't any friction between the full and part timers, but that they live a precarious life where they can never really guarantee what their income will be, because when budgets are cut, the adjunct contracts are the first to go.

"These are a couple of points of great shame, I think. This state, with its reputation of having great higher ed, has this underclass of workers that they choose to exploit and it needs to end," said LeBlanc.

Observer Editor-in-Chief Kim Whiting contributed to this story.

For me, it is not about me instructing the student, it is about us finding a way to succeed as a two person team.

- Jerome Fallon

position. We have paid our dues!" said Corcoran.

Fairness for adjunct professors has become a hot-button issue between state lawmakers and advocates for change; specifically, The Massachusetts Teachers Association (MTA) and the Massachusetts Community College Council (MCCC).

Some adjuncts say their working environment affects their abilities to reach students.

"The disadvantage is not getting classes that work with your other jobs, inconsistency with course availability, never getting to teach those courses that you

love and are actually better suited for, losing the money we rely on, and the constant wonder if you will always be adjunct," said Corcoran. "But a big disadvantage to me is when students ask me at the end of the semester and even years later 'What courses are you teaching next semester? What else can I take with you?' It is sad that I can never answer them, and it breaks my heart," said Corcoran.

However, some adjuncts say

I strive to have a strong relationship with my students and put their needs first. I don't have an office. But I make myself available to my students.

- Kelly Boylan

person team. With 30 or so students, that's 30 teams you need to try to create. It's time consuming and requires effort but it also portrays to the student that you are committed."

Angel Baez, a 20 year old Liberal Arts Major, said, "Limited office hours hurt students ability to flourish and get the help they

comfortable in doing so and to make them understand the value in those ideas and how to apply them in the outside world. All of this is not to say that college campuses are the only place where employees are exploited. On the contrary, there are quite a few industries that rely on sub-contractors to do much of the work,

More

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With less sunlight, some people get SAD

How you can beat the upcoming "winter blues"

By RACHAEL SARCIONE
Correspondent

With half of the fall semester gone and winter fast approaching, NECC students may find the "winter blues" hard to avoid.

According to the American Psychological Association, Seasonal Affective Disorder is estimated to affect 10 million Americans and is more common in women. SAD usually

starts to set in around daylight savings time and continues until spring. The decrease in daylight can cause a wide range of symptoms that lead to a depressed mood.

Jetting off to a tropical locale would be a surefire way to ease symptoms of SAD. Of course, with the cost of living and tuition on a constant rise, college students have to rely on more practical regimens for keeping their spirits up.

NECC student Rhiannon Hardy said she visits a tanning salon all year. "I look better and it in-

creases my mood," she said.

Methods involving light exposure, including using a light therapy box, may help in low to moderate cases of SAD.

However, severe symptoms may be harder to treat without the use of therapy or medications.

Students who wish to seek professional help with SAD are encouraged to visit NECC's Counseling Services office for assistance: on the Haverhill Campus, Room D117 in the Sports and Fitness Center; on the Lawrence Campus, Room L115 in the John R. Dimitry Building.

Fundraising at NECC

COG and CLSC hold bake sales on both campuses

By RACHAEL SARCIONE
Correspondent

NECC students, staff and faculty continue to show support for the community. Student organizations held bake sales on both the Lawrence and Haverhill campuses last week to raise money for charity.

The Community Outreach Group hosted their semi-annual bake sale in the Spurk lobby with proceeds going to the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

"We typically raise between \$200 and \$300 each time we have a bake sale," said COG representative Lisa Pasho.

COG will be hosting their Winter Wonderland bake sale on Wednesday, Dec. 2, in the same location.

"We're still figuring out who the money will go to," said Pasho. COG meets every Monday

from noon to 1 p.m. in room C116 on the Haverhill campus and invites all students who would like to get involved in helping the community.

The Clinical Laboratory Sciences Club, along with faculty advisors Brenda Salinas and Stacy Ayotte, raised funds for the Bread and Roses Soup Kitchen during a double bake sale in the iHealth and Dimitry buildings on the Lawrence campus.

In addition to hosting a blood drive at Holy Family Hospital on Nov. 17 and 19, the CLSC will be conducting a food drive to benefit Bread and Roses and will place receptacles for non-perishable food items on both campuses through Nov. 20.

Students interested in joining the Community Outreach Group can contact Meredith Gunning, faculty adviser, at (978) 556-3539.

Students interested in joining the Clinical Laboratory Sciences Club can contact adviser Stacy Ayotte at (978) 738-7895.

Starfish name update

By RACHAEL SARCIONE
Correspondent

NECC is one step closer to naming the mascot of the Early Success Starfish Program.

After weeks of collecting submissions for the Name the Starfish contest, the Student Success

Center sent out an email asking that each student cast their vote between Oct. 28 and Nov. 3 for one of the six finalists.

The finalists were:

-Dazzle
-Stellar
-Jefferson

-Sparkle
-Journey
-Johnny Blue Fins

Be sure to check the Nov. 18 issue of the NECC Observer to find out who won the contest and received a bag of prizes and gift cards.



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Sports

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Nowinski kicks off STEM series

Former pro wrestler brings concussion education to NECC

By KYLE BENSON

Sports Editor

On Oct. 21 in the Hartleb Technology Center, Christopher Nowinski, a former Harvard football player, pro wrestler, NFL-PA advisor and author, spoke to about 100 people about the severity of concussions and head injuries.

Nowinski, author of the book "Head Games" and founder of the Concussion Legacy Foundation, handed out pamphlets and sheets on how to prevent head injuries. Different sheets were prepared for parents, coaches and athletes, filled with the actual definition of a concussion, symptoms of a concussion, and what to do in the event of a concussion.

Head injuries and concussions hit home with Nowinski because he suffered a severe concussion that put him out of sports forever.

Concussions in professional sports have been a hot-button topic for the past few years, more specifically in the NFL and the NHL. The fast, hard-hitting games put all players at risk of a career-ending injury. These con-

cussions in the long term can also lead to death or suicide.

In 2012, longtime NFL linebacker Junior Seau succumbed to his long-term brain injury and took his own life, shooting himself in the chest. Seau suffered a type of chronic brain damage known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE). This type of brain damage has been found in other deceased NFL players.

Nowinski now goes around the country speaking to different groups, talking about the importance of concussion education.

The "Team Up" program gives training sessions to educators and coaches, who can then teach the lessons locally.

"We, as coaches, are on the front lines and must take charge in educating the players and the parents."

- Jack Roy

"It became a concerning thing for me, which I found educational, because this year alone I've had two kids with concussions," said Darren Stratton, the coach of the NECC basketball team. Stratton brought his whole team to the presentation so they could learn about the severity of head injuries

as well.

"I think Chris and his department are doing an excellent job, presenting and making awareness about it," Stratton said.

"Heads Up" is an extension of the Concussion Foundation specially made for youth athletes, coaches, and parents. It highlights that concussions can happen at any age and can affect you for the rest of your life if not treated properly.

Jack Roy, a coach in the Haverhill Junior Football League, was in the crowd and related the presentation to his youth football players.

"It is extremely important for coaches at all levels to under-



Photo by Kim Whiting

From L-R: NECC President Lane Glenn, Christopher Nowinski, Beckie Adams

"He did a great job. I wish we could have had another hour or two more to discuss his programs and the research. Who better to talk about this issue than someone with his experience?" Roy said.

Katherine Regus was critiquing Nowinski's presentation for her Business Communications class and was impressed.

"I have to say that I really liked it, he was direct and he went straight to the point," Regus said.

"He engaged with the audience very well trying to ask questions related to situations that involved the athletes that were sitting there."

Chris Nowinski's presentation was the first of four STEM Series presentations at NECC.

To find out more on brain injuries and Nowinski, visit www.ConcussionFoundation.org.

Observer Editor-in-Chief Kim Whiting contributed to this story.

Freshmen vs. Sophomores

NECC Knights scrimmage before season starts

By KYLE BENSON

Sports Editor

The season for the NECC Knights basketball squad is almost here. They just came back from a tournament in New York and New Jersey and are just about ready to take on the regular season on November 3 at New Hampshire Technical Institute in Concord, N.H.

Before that though, the freshmen and sophomores on the team took on each other in an intersquad game on Oct. 29 to further their training for the upcoming

season.

Before the game, Head Coach Darren Stratton talked about his team.

"I like our enthusiasm, I really like the group's work ethic. They're working extremely hard. The big concern for me is obviously rebounding," Stratton said.

Stratton brought up rebounding because the Knights are an overall shorter team than most in the division.

For the intersquad game, Stratton coached the freshmen, who were wearing blue uniforms. Assistant Coach Joe Tardiff coached the sophomores, who sported the gray jerseys.

Early in the first quarter, it was apparent that the sophomores had more experience and chemistry than the freshman. Sophomores Jonathan Paulino and Kevin Brito made swift plays and had great communication on the court. Paulino and Matthew Jameson both scored multiple 3-pointers.

The sophomores continued to show experience on defense, holding back the freshman offense and making it hard for them to hit the net.

The Knights first home game is on Nov. 10, when they face Dean College. Admission to the event will be free.



Photo by Kyle Benson

Knights players fight for ball control under the net.



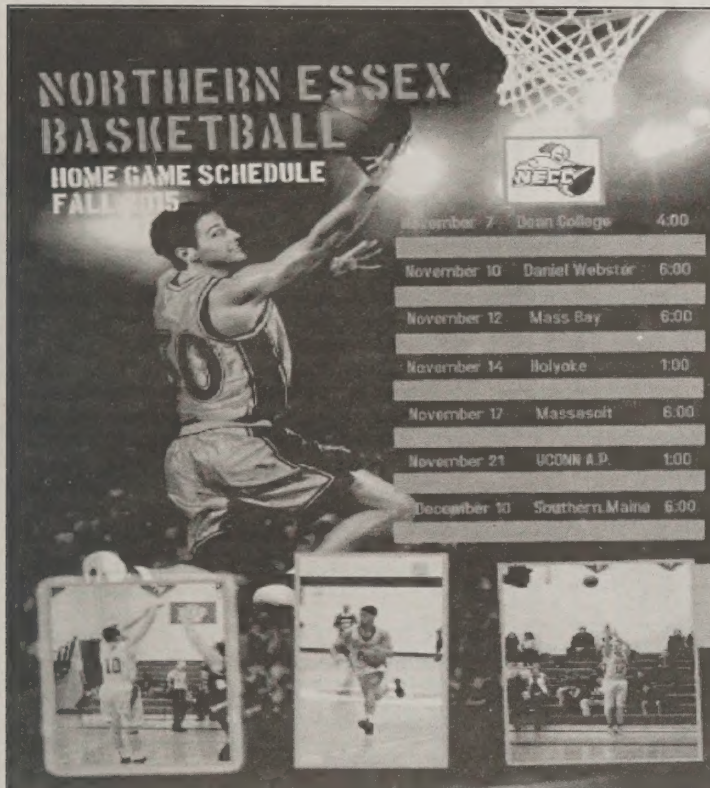
Photo by Sue MacAvoy

Former and current Knights baseball players take a team photo on Alumni Day.

Sports

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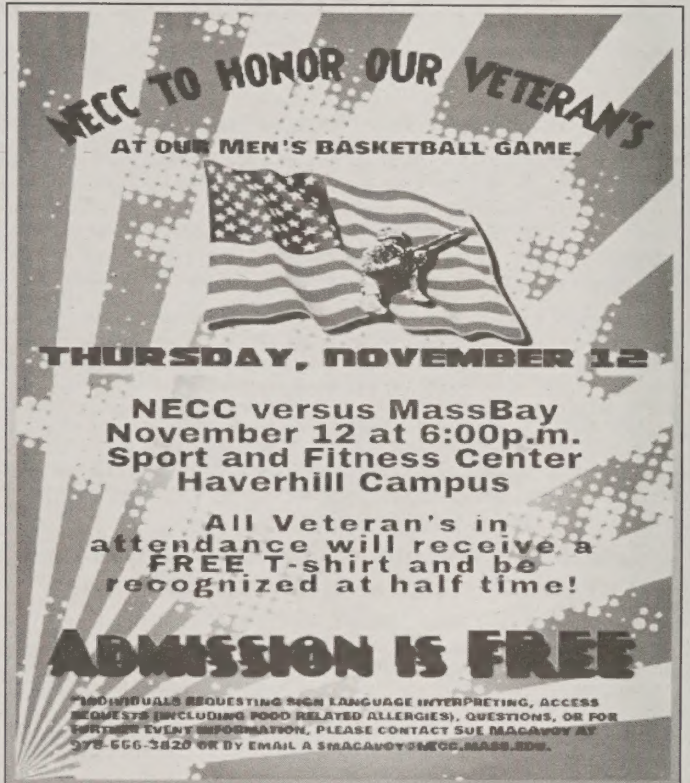
NECC basketball home schedule



NORTHERN ESSEX BASKETBALL
HOME GAME SCHEDULE
FALL 2015

November 7	Dean College	4:00
November 10	Daniel Webster	6:00
November 12	Mass Bay	6:00
November 14	Holyoke	7:00
November 17	Massasoit	6:00
November 21	UConn A.D.	1:00
December 10	Southern Maine	6:00

Veterans Day game information



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Cross Country ending November 7

By KYLE BENSON
Sports Editor

The November 7 NJCAA Division III Championship meet at Holyoke will be the last meet of the season for the Cross Country team. Leah Finnegan will be the lone NECC runner at Holyoke.

Saturday October 31 was the Community College of Rhode Island JUCO Invitational, where Austin Thiele placed 11th on an 8K course, grabbing his season best time of 30:40.

Finnegan ran the Women's race and finished in 28:19 in a 5K.



Photo by Sue MacAvoy
Austin Thiele after placing 11th at the JUCO Invitational.



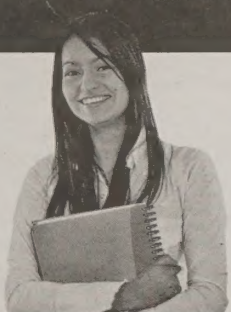
Photo by Sue MacAvoy
Coach Thom Bradley posing with his team.

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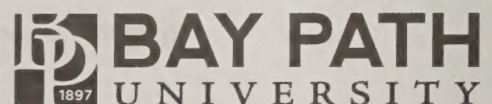
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Words can run in any direction, including diagonal, backwards and upside down

- BLACKBOARD
BOOKS
CALCULATIONS
COMPUTING
DRAMA
ENGLISH
ESSAY
HOMEWORK
LAPTOP
LEARNING
- LECTURES
MATH
MEMORIZE
NOTEBOOK
PAPER
PENCIL
PRESSURE
PROFESSORS
PROJECT
QUIZ
- READING
SCIENCE
SOCIOLOGY
SPELLING
STUDY
SUCCESS
TECHNOLOGY
TEST
TUTORS
WRITING



Photo by Kim Whiting
A crisp fall day on the Haverhill campus.

The biggest scare of ‘Goosebumps’: how much it insults the audience

By JOWI MELI
Copy Editor

☆☆☆
“Goosebumps” currently sits at 73% on review aggregator Rotten Tomatoes. I am mystified. This movie somehow takes the dopey-fun formula of the 1995 Robin Williams comedy “Jumanji” and sucks out all likability. It should have been titled “Dumb, Pretty White People Running Away from Unconvincing CGI Monsters.”
The movie’s opening, which must set some sort of record for nonchalant use of cliché, follows Zach Cooper (Dylan Minnette) and mom Gale (Amy Ryan) as they ... wait for it ... move into their new house. Zach is mildly angry because the fictional town of Madison, Delaware is lame, and because unpacking a box of things from his old house reminds him that his father died.
I say “mildly angry” because Zach is less a character capable of feeling angst and more a repository for the sort of cool, distant sarcasm used by bad screenwriters in place of actual dialogue. That goes for the rest of the cast, too, including Hannah (Odeya Rush), the gorgeous girl next door, and Champ (Ryan Lee), the dorky kid at Zach’s new school that will inevitably become his comic foil.

We know Champ is a dork the first time we see him because he is wearing a shirt that says “This Kid is Cool.” And because his teeth are sort of funny looking. And because his name is Champ.
But I digress. We sit through laborious opening scenes of Hannah placed in apparent mortal peril by her father. They’re laborious because we’ve seen the trailers, which reveal that her father is not some sort of disturbed child-abuser, but in fact “Goosebumps” author R.L. Stine (Jack Black). He has to prevent his secret collection of magical books from being opened, because they contain the monsters he created. Guess what Zach and Champ do in their attempt to rescue Hannah?
The premise, I’ll admit, is not a bad one. “Goosebumps” readers who have grown up can hardly be expected to remember the nitty-gritty details of Stine’s formulaic novels, but you can bet they remember the creatures. Unleashing these monstrosities on a small town leverages the same visceral satisfaction many viewers felt while watching “Jumanji,” where Robin Williams and friends became passive observers of suburban destruction.
But my mind raced ahead of the movie’s script, which offers



Photo courtesy of Columbia Pictures
Left to right: Odeya Rush, Ryan Lee, Dylan Minnette and Jack Black scream at the terrifyingly dated humor of “Goosebumps.”

few surprises and fewer laughs. Black is on auto-pilot here, delivering a sensationally unfunny and embarrassingly mannered performance as Stine. Why couldn’t the script explore his inspiration for these creatures? Why couldn’t we be offered a compelling explanation for their transition from fiction to reality?
No, the movie chooses to answer a different question instead: How much can we insult the intelligence of kids in the audience? In the name of “wholesome family entertainment,” the movie labors over tired, dated jokes: sexist ones, mostly originated by Jillian Bell as Zach’s aunt. She gives him a Bedazzled New York Yankees hat as a moving-in present, and you can almost hear the wah-wah music: “But auntie, this is a girl’s hat!” And when Champ makes the absurd mistake of asking Zach to attend a dance with him? Wah-wah-waaaah: “Two boys, dance together?!”
The humor of Bell’s character is supposed to come from the fact that she’s incompetent at finding a man to date, ho ho. But don’t worry: every single character, including her, comes to be matched with a corresponding white mate at the end. Except Zach’s mom, but to be fair, they did write in a nice gym coach for her — it’s just that, like her dead husband, he’s forgotten by writers who couldn’t care less about Stine, his books or the kids who read them.